

Daily Herald, October 20, 2007

Commuters using the Route 60 bridge over the Tri-State Tollway near Lake Forest will need to endure some pain before receiving relief.

Work related to the long-planned reconstruction and widening of the Route 60 bridge is to start early next month, according to Republican U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk's office. Additional details aren't expected until Monday.

Lake County board Chairwoman Suzi Schmidt expressed satisfaction after learning the Route 60 bridge work is supposed to begin soon. She said drivers will find it worth any inconveniences.

"I always tell people, it's like childbirth. You forget how bad it was," Schmidt said Friday.

About \$9 million in federal money will be authorized for the \$18.5 million project that'll be led by the Illinois Department of Transportation.

Several major employers are near Route 60 and the Tri-State Tollway, including W.W. Grainger Inc. in Mettawa as well as Brunswick Corp. and Trustmark Cos. in Lake Forest.

Considered one of the more congested interchanges in northern Illinois, the east-west Route 60 bridge handles about 36,000 vehicles daily.

One significant step toward federal funding for the Route 60 bridge occurred when the U.S. House approved a transportation bill in 2004. Schmidt was part of an effort that lobbied vigorously for local roads to be folded into the transportation bill.

"It's fun to have any project happen in Lake County," Schmidt said. "I know Mark (Kirk) has been working very diligently on this Route 60 project."